

## Chapter 63

[Vivienne]

I look at him and wonder: did I really marry this man for what's in his heart, or was I just attracted to his face, like so many women out there?

Because honestly, how did I miss it before? How did I miss this...this man that he's turning out to be these days?

It's like I never really knew him.

"You wouldn't."

He scoffs out a small chuckle, leaning back and crossing his legs. "Wouldn't I?"

He would. I can see it in his eyes. This man is as stubborn and proud as they get. I know this about him. And if he wants something, he would stop at nothing to get it, consequences be damned.

"Why? Why are you doing this?"

He looks away for a brief moment, as if something outside the window caught his eye, then turns back to face me, looking deep into my eyes.

"You know why. You always know why."

And I do, of course I know why, I've always known. For Caden, his family is everything. They're more important than his life itself. Which is why he has always gone to extreme lengths to keep them protected.

I swallow the lump in my throat, ignoring the way my heart hurts. This time, it's me who looks away, not wanting to see him and get another

reminder of why our marriage was such an impressive failure. “So, this is it, huh? You were always going to stand there and watch your family hurt me over and over again, and say nothing because...because they are family and anything they do is just a small inconvenience that you’re more than happy to just brush under the rug.”

He doesn’t say anything, and I can’t help the way my eyes sting with hot tears.

“I was your family, too, you know?” I look back at him, not able to hide the way tears shimmer in my eyes. “I was your wife, for fuck’s sake. But that wasn’t enough for you to be so caring and protective of me, was it?”

He doesn’t even flinch.

“I really hope it’s all worth it, Caden,” I inhale a deep breath, pushing my hair out of my face. “I hope every sacrifice you’ve made, every time you’ve put them before yourself, before us, pays off. Because mark my words, there’s going to come a day when they’ll demand more than you can give, when they’ll drain you dry and leave you with nothing. And when that day comes, you’ll find yourself completely alone. You’ll have no one to turn to, nowhere to go. And it’ll hit you like a ton of bricks—that you threw everything away for people who never gave a damn about you beyond what you could do for them. Every single time you sit in that silence, you’ll feel it—knowing that it’s all your fault. You want to know why?”

He stares back at me, and for a minute it almost feels like he’s frozen to the spot, like he’s stuck and can’t look away. But I know better than to trust anything in him.

“Why?”

“Because at the end of the day, Caden, you chose this misery. You chose your twisted family over the life we could’ve built together, over the love I gave you without hesitation. And you know what? I fucking hate you for it. I hate you for what you did to me, to us. I hate you for being such a selfish, cold-hearted bastard who threw everything away like it meant nothing.

When I think about how much I loved you, how much I bled for you, all I’m left with is this unbearable weight of regret, heartbreak, and disappointment. It’s like a goddamn anchor in my chest, knowing that everything we had was a joke to you—something to discard without a second thought. Not even a shred of it mattered to you. You were never satisfied, never content with what we had. Nothing I did was ever enough for you. And now, looking back, I see the truth—it was all just a pathetic, pointless effort to love a man who was never capable of loving me back.”

I wait. Wait to see some emotion, something that tells me he’s affected, or if he cares.

I wait. And wait. But nothing changes.

He’s still the same old Caden, still a stone-cold, emotionless, stubborn jackass who would turn a blind eye to the actions of his family in a heartbeat.

When I’m done, he stands up from his chair, looking like a marble statue in a perfectly cut, immaculately tailored black suit.

“I’m glad we had this conversation,” he says. “And I hope you’ll think about what I said and decide not to waste both of our time any longer.”

Before I can reply, or scream, or throw my pillow at him, or any of the above, he walks away. However, not before glancing over his shoulder

one last time, accusation clear in his dark eyes.

“Oh, and just so we’re clear, Vivienne—it was you who demanded the divorce, not me. You’re the one who tore this marriage apart. So before you start throwing around your pathetic accusations, acting like some tragic victim, maybe you should take a good, long look at yourself. Maybe the truth will come to you that way. Have a nice day.”

And then, he leaves.

I finally grab the pillow and throw it at the door, a deep growl rumbling in my chest.



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